

Main Street Program Projects and Activities

In its first eighteen months of operation, a neighborhood Main Street program can expect to achieve the following type of results.

Organization

- Establish the program with appropriate legal and financial accounting structures
- Hire staff
- Raise matching funds to match citywide program funding
- Establish the board of directors and four committees
- Recruit 40-60 board and committee members
- Establish a website
- Develop printed informational pieces about the program
- Establish a mission statement
- Design and publish a quarterly newsletter
- Hold six educational events about the Main Street program

Promotion

- Develop a promotional calendar
- Produce one new special event
- Produce 2-3 new retail/business promotions
- Produce one image-enhancing event
- Involve 50% of businesses in promotional activities
- Target specific markets to attract through promotions

Design

- Train the design committee
- Hold 1-2 clean up events in the commercial district
- Coordinate design assistance to 6-8 property owners
- Facilitate 2-4 simple improvements (e.g., storefront paint/awnings/signs, flower planting, etc.)
- Inventory the buildings in the district
- Evaluate condition of public amenities and streetscape
- Educate property owners about appropriate maintenance practices
- Develop a plan for design improvements
- Begin to develop design guidelines

Economic Restructuring

- Analyze existing market data
- Gather baseline statistics about jobs, income, businesses, and sales
- Collect new data on customer perceptions through surveys
- Define the district's trade area and primary customers
- Survey 100% of business operators in the district to determine their needs
- Provide 2-4 educational seminars for business operators
- Promote existing financial incentives for building rehabilitation and/or business development
- Market existing business development technical and financial resources to business operators

In addition to these first-year expected achievements, neighborhood Main Street programs can be evaluated annually according to the Main Street Ten Criteria that recognize excellence in commercial district revitalization. These criteria include the following:

1. Broad-based public and private sector support for the revitalization process
2. Vision and mission statements
3. Comprehensive work plan and funding plan
4. Historic preservation ethic
5. Active board of directors and committees
6. Adequate operating budget and funding plan
7. Paid, professional executive director
8. Program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers
9. Reporting of key statistics to coordinating program
10. Current member of the National Main Street Network

Guidelines for Effective Meetings

PLAN

- Prepare an agenda that contains a brief description of what the meeting will cover -- not just headings (see attached)
- Have precise objectives -- what the meeting is intended to achieve
- Find out what others need to talk about before the meeting
- If a meeting is not necessary, do not have one out of routine
- Start on time! End on time!

INFORM

- Let everyone know what is to be discussed and why it is being discussed
- Let everyone know what you want to achieve from the discussion
- Personally contact everyone and encourage attendance

PREPARE

- Arrange items in necessary order and logical sequence
- Allocate a specific time for each item based on importance, not urgency --
- Urgency can be handled by the sequence
- Anticipate what information and/or people may be needed to make the proper decisions
- Do not waste board meeting time with trivial items or micro-management of the executive director

STRUCTURE AND CONTROL

- Structure the discussion to keep members to the point and on track
- Control private discussions within the group
- Control disagreements, stay on point, recognize emotional responses for what they are
- Avoid continually covering old ground
- Utilize corporate resolutions to advance specific actions

SUMMARIZE AND RECORD

- Summarize and record decisions and action to be taken

Sample Agenda for a Board Meeting

99TH AND Z MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT Board Meeting

January 1, 2002
12:00 PM
Main Street Center

AGENDA

1. Minutes Approved
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Committees:
 - Organization
 - Promotion
 - Design
 - Economic Restructuring
4. Executive Director Report
5. Old Business:
 - Board Goals
 - Special Event
6. New Business:
 - Membership Brochure
 - Fund-raising
7. *Open Mike* Time
8. Announcements

DEFUSING A DIFFICULT SITUATION:

10 Guiding Principles

1. **Identify the problem.** Take a look at the situation. Often the problem that appears on the surface is not the actual problem.
2. **Verify a trend.** Make sure the problem is ongoing in nature and not simply a one time aberration.
3. **Take it to the source.** Nothing gets solved when most of the discussion is going on behind the backs of the persons or entities involved. Have courage to confront situations directly, and make sure that all involved parties are part of the solution process.
4. **Brainstorm alternative solutions.** There is hardly ever one right answer to the problem. The “obvious” solution often addresses only the surface problem.
5. **Be patient.** Every organization experiences problems and difficulties, some of which take a long time to resolve.
6. **Put it into perspective.** Many organizational problems do not deserve the time or energy devoted to them, particularly when those human resources can be put to a more productive use.
7. **Make it a family affair.** Take time for a lot of “hugs”, and make sure no one talks about the problem externally.
8. **Agree to disagree.** Not everyone is going to agree all the time. Develop the habit of agreeing to disagree when it is obvious that the solution is not going to please everyone.
9. **Strive for “win-win.”** Long term relationships are best maintained when both parties to a disagreement feel they have gained something with the outcome.
10. **Commit to the “good of the order.”** Nothing is worth the total derailment of the organization. Be willing to move past a problem, even if it never gets completely solved, in order to work together for the common goals of the organization.